4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Dard AV3
Chitral

The chorus at the Mehtar's durbar was composed of all his men off duty, men from all the neighbouring villages who had come to see the fun, a stray Kafir or two who grinned in a friendly way at us, all the heterogeneous rabble possible to collect in Chitral. The price they paid for being present and looking at the dancing was continued applause, shouts of encouragement to the dancers, in which they were led by an official who was described as the head of the Mehtar's household. He was a very wild-looking creature, who rushed along the ranks of the spectators dressed in a scarlet cloth choga, and armed with a big ornamented stick, with which he belaboured any of the crowd who did not shout loud enough. After we had sat through the performance for some time the Mehtar rose, and, taking me by the hand, escorted me along a narrow path made by laying down cotton cloth, white and coloured, and stuffs of various kinds, finishing in a strip of sham kinkob, all of which became the perquisite of my servants after I had passed over it. The path led along the faces of the fort to the private garden, from which there was a door leading to the household offices and ladies' apartments. In the garden we found a tent pitched, into which we entered, followed by three or four of the Mehtar's most important sons and nobles.

Directly we had sat down the Mehtar began an oration which lasted an hour, with interruptions to drink iced water, and to rub snuff on his gums, the Chitrali way of taking this most seductive form of the weed. The upshot of his discourse was that